



4th Grade Developmental Guide

The biggest change in development for 4th graders is the change in friendships. All of a sudden, they care what others think of them and want to fit in. Your child probably has at least one very close friend this year that they enjoy spending time with.

Here are some of the developmental changes they are experiencing right now.

Physical

- Are ready for competitive and cooperative games
- Are physically maturing (Girls physically mature faster than boys.)
- May engage in habitual movements like nail biting, hair twisting, etc.

Emotional

- Attempt to resolve conflict before involving adults; understand that not everyone views things the way they do
- Are no longer egocentric
- Have a high level of emotional intensity
- Can be self-critical
- May worry

Relational

- Gravitate toward certain friends
- Need encouragement
- Begin to care about social issues
- See adults as fallible, realizing their inconsistencies
- Have a strong desire to fit in
- May begin to show interest in opposite sex

- May become deeply attached to a best friend

Spiritual

- Are concerned about being right or wrong and being fair
- Have a strong tension between being a child and pushing toward independence
- Benefit from some freedom to exercise their growing independence
- View fairness and justice as big themes in their lives



Invitation to Friendship

4th grade is the peek year for relationships. Many 4th graders are beginning to express interest in the opposite sex. Your child is beginning to listen to their peers. Many children this age develop an intimate relationship with a best friend. We can be wise in helping our children choose their friends well since friends are the biggest influence in the life of a child after parents.

Kickstarter 1: Loyalty in Friendship

The story of David and Jonathan is the “go to” story in the Bible for friendship. David and Jonathan were extremely close. Read about their special friendship in **1 Samuel 18:1-4**.

David finished talking with Saul. After that, Jonathan and David became close friends. Jonathan loved David just as he loved himself.

From that time on, Saul kept David with him. He didn't let him return to his father's home.

Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him just as he loved himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David. He also gave him his military clothes. He even gave him his sword, his bow and his belt.

What does Jonathan give David to signify he cares for him? Why do you think Jonathan chose these items to give to David?

These items were things very close to Jonathan. Jonathan was a prince, so he was giving David a prince's robe. Jonathan was also a soldier, so to give up his sword, bow and belt meant he was giving things he valued away.

Ask your child who she/he considers to be a close friend. What is something special that your child owns that he/she would be willing to give away to a friend in a gesture similar to Jonathan's, as a way to say thank you for being my friend. Help your child name the person, the item, and the time for them to give this item away.

Kickstarter 2: Respect in Friendship

Have your child fill out the “I want a friend who...” sheet. Girls use the girl outline, boys use the boy outline. Have him/her read the characteristics they list. Read **Matthew 7:1-2**

In everything, do to others what you would want them to do to you. This is what is written in the Law and in the Prophets.

Take a serious look back at the list of characteristics your child wrote, and one by one, ask your child if he/



she exhibits these characteristics as a friend. We say we want our friends to be a certain way, but are we being that for them? If there are a couple ways that your child knows he/she could be a better friend, pray with them that God would help them develop those traits.

your child is brave enough, have them go for it. It's not often that we take the time to tell people why they are special to us. This could be a significant start of transparency and honesty in your child's life.

Kickstarter 3-Encouragement in Friendship

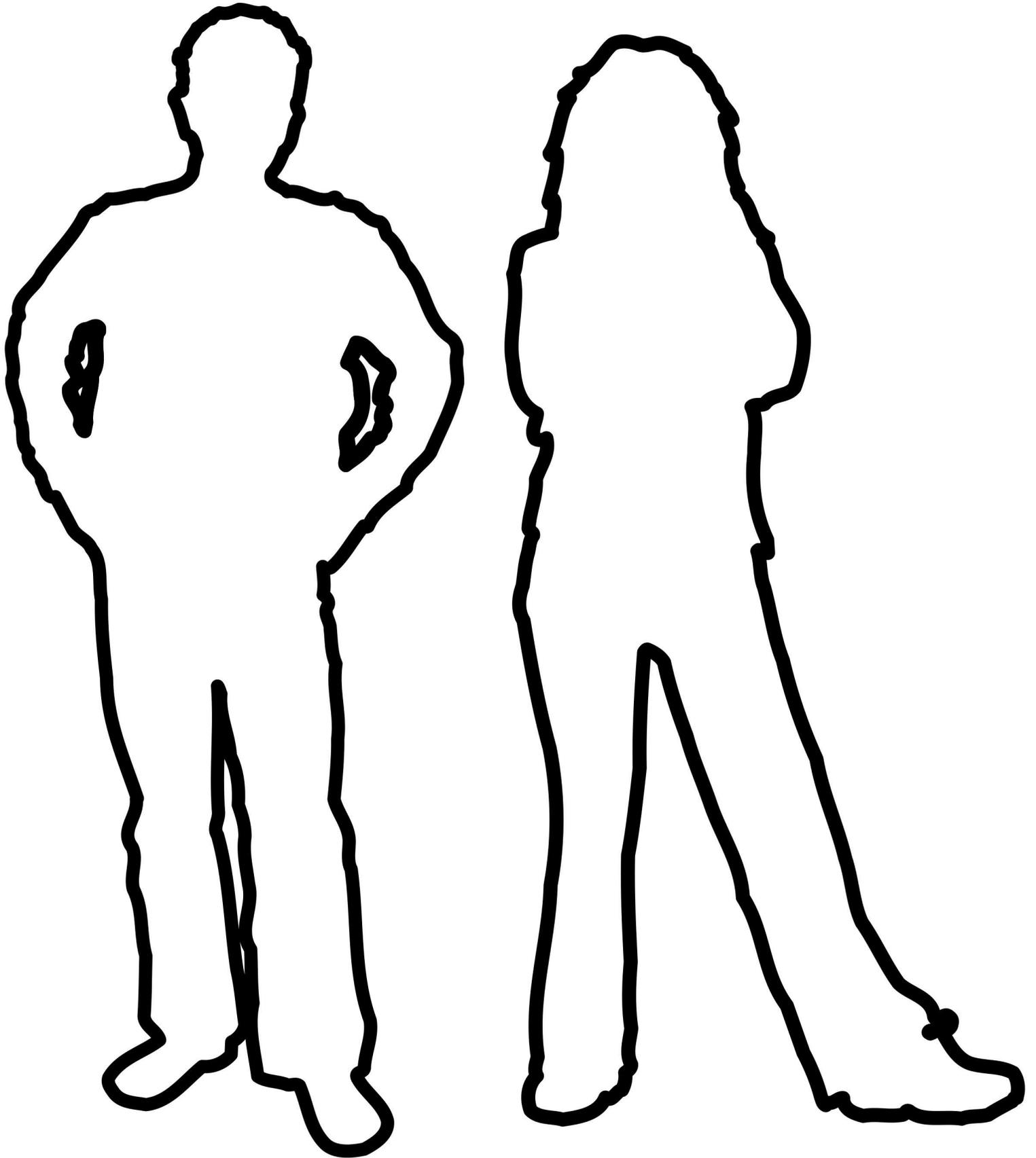
1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us:

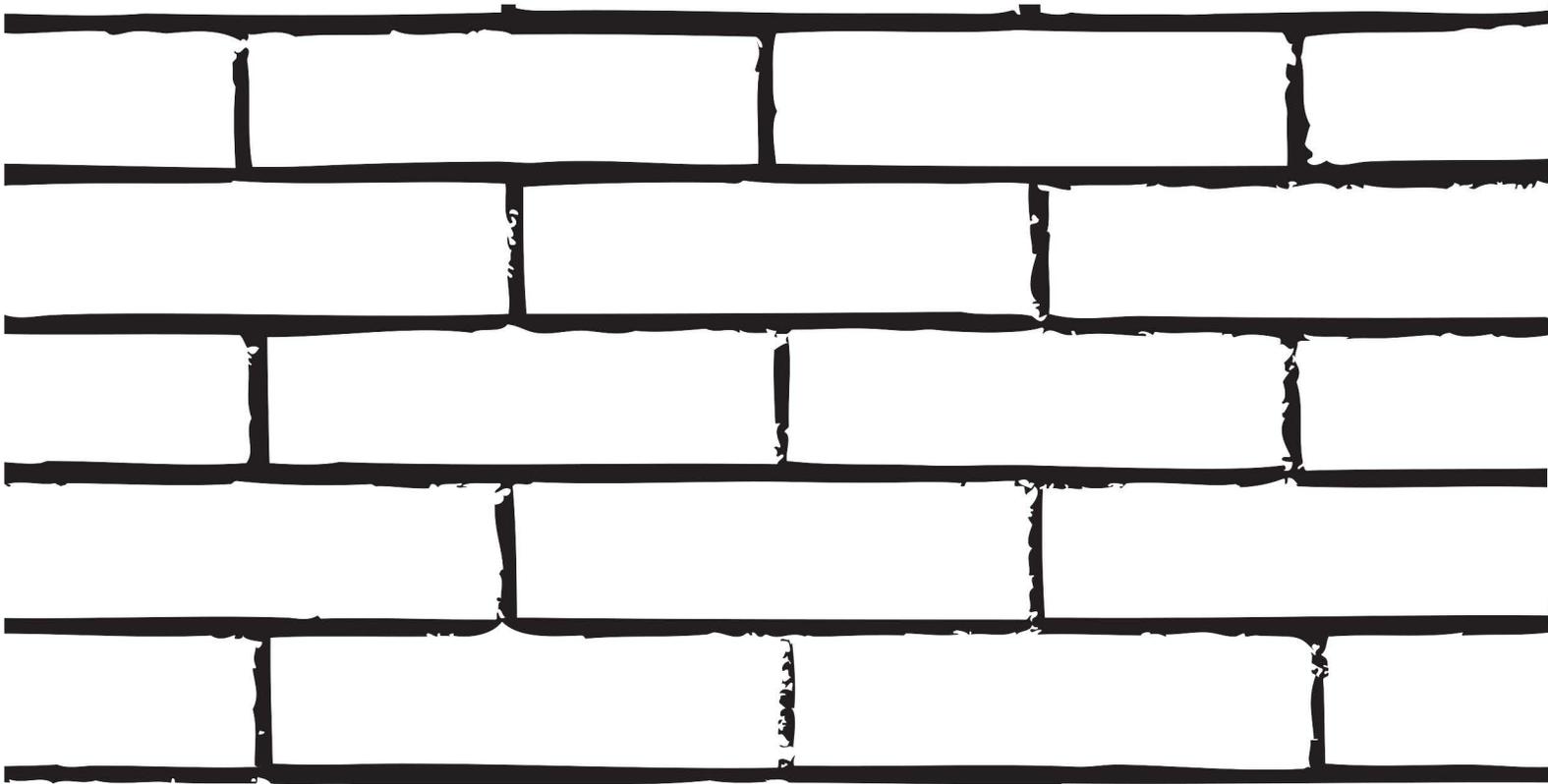
So cheer each other up with the hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that's what you are doing.

As a friend, we should be building up others or encouraging them. This is a good time to help your child think through his/her friends. Is there someone in his/her life who isn't encouraging. If so, take this opportunity to help them see that a good friend is one who encourages and builds up.

Encouraging words build people up and make them strong. Think of a brick wall. Each brick stacked with another and another will eventually create a strong wall. Ask your child to think of a close friend and write his/her name or draw a picture of him/her on top of the bricks. Have them write encouraging words about their friend in each of the bricks. What makes him/her special? What does your child appreciate about that friend? Etc. For some kids it may be super awkward to give this to their friend. However, if

I WANT A FRIEND WHO...





Art of Friendship

We want to help you present your child with a piece of art that signifies who they are as a friend. Ask several of your child's friends and friends' parents and/or family members to give you 2 to 3 words that describe your child. Please see the sample message as a point of reference for making this request. Then use these words to create a piece of art for your child's room. Depending on how "artsy" you are, you can personally make this item, hire a professional, or pay a talented teen to do your child's art piece. Here are several ways you can create art using the words:

- 1. Words painted on canvas**
- 2. Words etched in wood**
- 3. Words sketched on paper and framed, calligraphy or graffiti art**
- 4. Use a collage frame and put pictures of friends as well as words into the frames**
- 5. Decorate a poster board with the words**
- 6. Words seared into metal/iron**

There are tons of options for making this cool piece of artwork that is sure to be special to your child. Designate a time to give your child the gift. At the scheduled time, you can use the planning guide script as a guide for the presentation.

Message for friends' parents

Dear _____,

We are doing a special project for our son/daughter. We'd love your feedback since your child and our child are friends. Can you please ask your child to tell you 2 or 3 words he/she would use to describe my child? We're going to use these words to create a cool gift for him/her because we've been talking with them about friendship. Thanks so much!

Friendship Presentation Script

You are such a great friend. We've talked about friends showing loyalty, showing respect, and giving encouragement. I've seen you do these things with your friends, and I'm very proud of you. Through doing the Kickstarters together, we've seen the qualities to look for when choosing a friend and the kind of friend to be to others.

I asked your friends to give me a couple words that describe you, and this is what they came up with. We created a piece of art for you so that you can remember what your friends think of you and remember the kind of friend God wants you to be. This is what your friends said:

Read the words to your child.

Hopefully, this piece of art will remind you to be a good friend by being loyal, showing respect and giving encouragement. These are the traits that God wants us to have in our friendships.